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SOURCE Neue Zürcher Zeitung.THE SECRET GOVERNMENT IN PRAGUE

Claiming that the working methods and concepts of the ministerial officials were not in accordance with the principles of the People's Democracies, the Czech government, in December 1948, decided to reorganize its ministries. A special Ministerial Committee was charged with the reorganization which public opinion, both in Czechoslovakia and abroad, viewed as an attempt at a large-scale purge. However, the real purpose of this reorganization was quite different.

The measure was taken primarily in order to subject the ministries to the unconditional control of the Ministry of the Interior, a supervision against which some of the ministries, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Trade, had fought for a long time. The Ministry of the Interior and the Personnel Division (cadre division) of the Communist Party are represented in the Ministerial Committee. Specialists from the various ministries and from the Party are added to the committee when desired, but all ministers are excluded.

As a result of the reorganization, the powers of the various ministers were greatly curtailed by the appointment of deputy ministers. At least one of these deputy ministers is a direct representative of the Ministry of the Interior and is in charge of all personnel matters. Furthermore, a Party representative, whose identity is not made known officially, is attached to every ministry. These two functionaries cooperate in the disposition of all personnel matters. The respective minister has nothing to say in these matters, as they are not responsible to him but directly to the Ministry of the Interior and the Party, respectively. Each of these two representatives forms his own secret organization which keeps him constantly informed with regard to personnel, thus assuring complete supervision of all officials.

However, both the Ministry of the Interior and the Party are not only interested in the personnel angle; they want to know and control the daily routine of the ministries down to the smallest detail. Today, there is not a single document in the central offices of which the Party or the Interior Ministry has no knowledge. All matters are dealt with and disposed of in the interest of these two institutions rather than in the interests of the Republic of Czechoslovakia. Not until this subjugation has been carried through completely will the collaboration between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, i. e., between the Soviet Ministry for State Security and the Czech Ministry of the Interior, function 100 percent. It is in the interest of this collaboration with the Soviet Union that every trade

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agreement transaction, every railroad matter or action taken by the postal administration, and every move of the Foreign Ministry be controlled by the Party and the Ministry of the Interior.

Furthermore, the reorganization of the ministries makes it possible to establish complete control by the Party and the Interior Ministry of all foreign representations. These latter include the diplomatic and service personnel of the Foreign Ministry; the military attaches representing the Ministry of National Defense; the press and cultural attaches representing the Ministry of Information; and the commercial attaches and trade representatives representing the Ministry of Foreign Trade. The representatives of GTK (Czechoslovak Press Office), are also completely dependent upon the Ministry of Information. Following reorganization, all these foreign representations are under the rigid control of the Ministry for the Interior. The control exerted by the Party will be discussed later.

Control exercised by the Ministry of the Interior is twofold: (1) by jurisdiction over appointments and recalls, and (2) by placing in every embassy a representative with an independent secret code who is in direct touch with the Ministry of the Interior. In the case of embassies having radio communication with Prague, the radio telegrapher is also a confidential agent of the Ministry of the Interior.

The representatives of the ministry likewise have a twofold mission at the embassies: (1) they must watch the officials, particularly diplomatic personnel, and they have special instructions to observe their private lives and to gain insight into the entire routine and keep the Ministry of the Interior currently informed concerning their findings; (2) they must develop their own political intelligence service for the exclusive information of the Ministry of the Interior. A special budget is at their disposal for this purpose. Only in exceptional cases does the Ministry of the Interior pass on intelligence thus obtained to the proper Czechoslovak ministry. Inasmuch as neither the Ministry of the Interior, nor any other Czech agency can hardly exploit the intelligence thus obtained, it is obvious that it serves chiefly the Soviet Union.

It is significant that the espionage organizations of the People's Democracies, all of which are similarly constructed, cooperate to a negligible degree and make no effort to avoid duplication of labor. The information clearinghouse of the "Big Boss" seems to deem it advisable to maintain independent operation for each information service of the People's Democracies. The odd thing is that the very considerable expense of these intelligence procurement agencies has to be borne by the little fellows themselves. The costliness of these undertakings is demonstrated by the fact that in April 1949, the representative of the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior in Rome spent four times as much as the Legation there. With its very limited supply of foreign exchange, Czechoslovakia cannot cover the expense of this activity by its Ministry of the Interior; nor do these amounts appear in the official national budget.

It is up to the Ministry of the Interior itself to raise the funds required to carry on its intelligence service, i. e., by means of its enterprises abroad. Back in 1945 the Ministry of the Interior began to purchase real estate and potentially profitable business enterprises of all kinds in Italy, Germany, and Hungary. Firms were founded which began to do business at once. The ministry also exploited the economic insecurity of the victor countries. The monetary profits thus obtained were, and are, kept as reserves in countries abroad. When certain raw materials became scarce in Czechoslovakia and had to be procured illegally because the West would sell them only in extremely limited quantities or not at all in the open market, the ministry took its "cut" on these deals. The racketeers who procure these goods are either direct agents of the Ministry of the Interior or they are required to turn over to the ministry a certain percentage of the profits. Inasmuch as these deals are negotiated in neutral countries, the Ministry of the Interior was able to improve its position in these countries considerably. Thus a Czech underworld, corrupt beyond imagination, developed in nearly all European countries as well as in South America.

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All control and intelligence functions of the Ministry of the Interior are performed in Prague by a branch not located in the official edifice of the Ministry but in an unobtrusive private building. Its major officials work under assumed names which they do not use in their private lives. The foreign representatives of the ministry also frequently resort to pseudonyms.

Without the strong economic position which it created for itself, the Ministry of the Interior could never have attained its present status, namely that of the actual secret regime of Czechoslovakia. It controls every ministry, the Cabinet, as well as the office of the President of the Republic, every rural mayor as well as every foreign representative, every large enterprise and every trade representative abroad.

The economic basis of this power was originally created by Zdenek Toman. Deals transacted by Section Chief Toman are of a type which can hardly be carried on the government's books. By their own corruption they facilitate the corruption of others. Toman was a personal friend and gambling partner of Minister of the Interior Nosek and therefore felt quite secure in all his ambiguous deals. But one day Toman had an argument with his deputy, who was obliged to know of his transactions and had participated in them. The deputy demanded and gained Toman's arrest. He was apprehended in February 1948, in the days when Gottwald came to power. In April he managed to escape to a South American republic. However, the financial groundwork created by Toman enabled the Ministry of the Interior to assume control of the government machine.

The Communist Party maintains its own representation in foreign countries, apart from the Ministry of the Interior. These organizations are directly responsible to Secretary General Slansky (Salzmann) and his deputies, Frank and Geminder. Furthermore, the Party maintains its own representation with all important Party setups, especially in the Soviet Union, France, Italy, Great Britain, with the SED in Soviet Zone Germany, and with the KPD (German Communist Party) in West Germany.

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